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ABSTRACT

The Professional Development Institute (PDI) is a 4-day orientation workshop for instructors entering service in the postsecondary vocational-technical school system in Arkansas. The PDI focuses on activities designed to accomplish the four goals set by the Arkansas Division of Vocational and Technical Education: to assist the instructor in making the transition into postsecondary vocational education, in forming professional habits, in understanding the duties of a vocational-technical instructor, and in developing a sense of pride in and belonging to the system. The workshop attempts to elevate the self-esteem of the participants. Goals are achieved through small and large group activities, discussions of case studies, simulation, use of videotapes, talks by former student organization members, and receptions and social activities. (Appendixes, which make up three-fourths of the document, include the PDI agenda, a getting-acquainted form, opening statement, goal summaries, and short case studies.) (KC)

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Professional Development Institute: A Personnel Development Workshop for New Postsecondary Vocational Technical Instructors

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Professional Development Institute: A Personnel Development Workshop for New Postsecondary Vocational Technical Instructors

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INTRODUCTION

The Professional Development Institute (PDI) is a four-day orientation workshop for instructors entering service in the postsecondary vocational-technical school system in Arkansas. The PDI is conducted by the Arkansas Division of Vocational and Technical Education as an initial component of a comprehensive professional development program. Satisfactory completion of a PDI is required of each newly-hired instructor during that instructor's first year of employment.

The PDI focuses on activities designed to accomplish goals set by the Division of Vocational and Technical Education. These goals are:

...To assist the instructor in understanding and making the transition into the postsecondary Vocational-Technical Educational System.

...To assist the instructor in understanding and formulating professional habits characteristic to an educational environment.

...To assist the instructor in understanding and relating to the duties and responsibilities of a Vocational-Technical instructor.

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...To assist the instructor in developing a sense of pride in and belonging to the overall Vocational-Technical Education System.

In general the PDI is an informal, activity oriented workshop conducted in a manner intended to elevate the self esteem and self image of its participants. Participant activity characterizes the conduct of the PDI; workshop goals are accomplished via the direction of participants' thought processes toward a highly personalized concept of the outcomes being addressed. A variety of instructional methodologies are employed with formalized teacher-student instructional sessions held to a minimum. The role of the PDI "instructors" as defined by their actions is one of facilitator of the learning process. They direct thinking, they do not dispense answers. (See Appendix One for Sample PDI Agenda)

Professional Development Institute Activities

The PDI begins like most workshops. First an introduction. In an effort to aid all participants in becoming more familiar with each other they are given a list of guidelines for their introductions. (See Appendix Two).

All activities conducted at the PDI are designed to achieve one or more of the overall goals. Goal one is achieved through both small and large group activities. The PDI participants are given a opening statement regarding the transition into postsecondary vocational technical education. (See Appendix Three).

When instructors have read the opening statement they are to individually list elements they have observed which are different about their new job as compared to their former job. Then they work in groups of 3 or 4 to compile a list of items which all agree upon. Each small group shares their list of transition elements with the total group. As each group shares their elements, group leaders categorize them into 6 or 8 common categories. This enables all participants to see that other teachers have similar concerns about the transition into their new occupation. As this section of the institute comes to a close participants are given a summary statement to tie the activity together. (See Appendix Four).

Goal two deals with professionalism. Participants are divided into groups with 6 to 10 members. They are given 15 to 20 case studies to read and discuss. (See Appendix Five for sample case studies).

Each group discusses implications of each situation in all the case studies. They select 6 to 8 case studies to be discussed by the total group. These selected cases are given to a panel of postsecondary vocational technical administrators for their views, insights and comments. PDI participants also make comments and ask questions regarding the Administrators comments. (For the summary of the professional goal see Appendix Six).

Goal three deals with selected duties and responsibilities of the vocational technical instructor. The first activities conducted consists of the total group of participants being divided into 4 equal groups. Each group is assigned a separate

topic (program management, student placement, student recruitment, an advisory committees) and instructed to plan, develop, and conduct a simulation, such as role-playing, based on their topic. The guidelines for this activity are 1) all members of the group must participate in the simulation, 2) the simulations must be 20 to 30 minutes long, 3) the simulations must present facts or issues regarding the assigned topic, and 4) the simulations must be presented to the whole group. The participants are given total freedom so they can be creative with their simulations.

In addition to the 4 previously mentioned duties and responsibilities, instruction and vocational student organization are also covered. Instruction is covered by allowing participants to break into small groups and view and discuss video tapes of examples of "real" classroom and laboratory instruction. Participants view the tapes for positive and negative teaching characteristics. This activity is concluded when all small groups get together and share their observations with others.

Vocational student organizations are covered by luncheon speakers who are former club members, current club advisors or state club supervisors. At the end of the workshop a goal summary sheet is given to all participants to tie all activities together. (See Appendix Seven).

Goal four focuses on helping the new instructors develop a sense of belonging to the overall vocational technical system. This goal is achieved through out the three day PDI with specific activities such as a reception held on the first day of the PDI. The reception allows instructors to meet and get to know other

teachers from other schools. Other activities include a banquet with the state director of vocational technical education serving as guest speaker. Also, the teachers are transported to the state department of education to meet and talk to their state supervisor and program leaders. However, possibly the most beneficial aspect gained by the teachers in the area of becoming part of the overall system comes from the relationship they develop with other teachers through out the PDI by working in small and large groups.

APPENDIX ONE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Radisson Legacy Hotel

November 13-16, 1990

A G E N D A

DAY ONE

1:00 - 1:15	WELCOME
1:15 - 1:45	Introduction
1:45 - 3:15	Transition to Postsecondary Vo-Tech: CONCERNS
3:15 - 3:30	BREAK
3:30 - 4:00	Transition to Postsecondary Vo-Tech: ACTION
4:00 - 4:30	Group Assignments
4:30 - 4:45	Logistics
4:45 - 5:00	Details

DAY TWO

8:00 - 10:30	Professionalism
10:30 - 11:30	Professionalism/Panel Discussion
11:30 - 1:00	LUNCHEON - VSO Speaker
1:00 - 1:45	Professional Growth Responsibilities
1:45 - 2:15	Professional Organizations
2:15 - 2:30	BREAK
2:30 - 5:00	Vo-Tech Teachers' Responsibilities

DAY THREE

8:00 - 12:00	Excellence in Teaching
12:00 - 1:30	LUNCH - On Your Own
1:30 - 2:30	The Road to Success
2:30 - 3:00	Preparation for Trip to Division Offices
3:00 - 5:00	Trip to Division Offices
6:00 -	PDI Banquet

DAY FOUR

9:00 - 10:30	Vo-Tech Teachers' Responsibilities
10:30 - 11:00	PDI Wrap-Up
11:00 - 11:15	BREAK
11:15 - 11:30	Summary and Closing Ceremony

Appendix Two

Getting Acquainted

Please list the following information:

Name_____

School in which you teach _____

_____

_____

How long have you been teaching there _____

_____

_____

Previous Occupations _____

_____

_____

Other places (states or countries) you have lived _____

_____

_____

Hobbies, interests, or talents_____

_____

_____

Appendix Three

Professional Development Institute

Transition Into Postsecondary Vocational-Technical Education

-Opening Statement-

You have recently made a job change. You have new or different job responsibilities. You are becoming acquainted with new and maybe different types of people. For some these are welcomed changes; for others they can be quite traumatic.

Some of the most important changes you will have to make are brought about because the purposes of the institution for which you now work -- a postsecondary vocational-technical school -- are different from the purposes of the institution, organization or company for which you last worked. This will mean you will have to change the way you approach your job -- the way you do things -- in order that your contributions foster the purposes of the school in which you work. For example, if you last worked for industry, your fellow colleagues were probably competent in performing the job at hand, you could rely on their ability to get the job done right. Now, you're faced with managing students who obviously do not have job skills in their efforts at accomplishing those same tasks. This can be an exasperating and frustrating effort for those who expect more than a student can deliver.

Appendix Four

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

GOAL SUMMARY

TO ASSIST THE INSTRUCTOR IN UNDERSTANDING AND MAKING THE TRANSITION INTO THE POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION SYSTEM.

A job change involves more than simply assuming a new set of job responsibilities or accepting pay from a different source. It will likely involve adapting to a new purpose or philosophy which in turn necessitates the development of an entirely different approach to the performance of job responsibilities.

Most newly hired instructors in the postsecondary vocational-technical schools come from one of four previous employment arenas: industry, high school vocational programs, academic education, or college. Each of these arenas has its own unique purpose and as such places it own unique set of expectations on the employee. The same is true with positions in the postsecondary vocational schools. Actions which were appropriate in a former arena of work may not be productive in this one.

As you assume your new role, it will be necessary that you confront these differing expectations -- these different purposes -- understand them, and adapt to them. For some, this is the most difficult adjustment they have to make when they change jobs. Studies indicate, however, that eventual success in a new position is related to the degree and rapidity with which one is able to make this transition.

Success in your new job will require your putting aside many job related practices which have been productive to the purposes of your former job arena and assuming new approaches to your job which are uniquely related to success as an instructor in a postsecondary vocational-technical school.

Appendix Five

PDI - Professionalism - Case Study No. 1

Tony is the auto body instructor at Briarsbend Vo-Tech School and is the owner of Tony's Body Shop in town as well. Frequently, Tony buys damaged cars and repairs them for sale through his body shop. Since his students at school need damaged cars to work on in lab, he has the damaged cars he plans to resell through Tony's Body Shop delivered to Briarsbend Vo-Tech School for his students to work on. After all, a car is a car, isn't it. What difference does it make who owns it, or how it will be used after the students are finished. The important thing is that students have the cars to work on, Tony rationalizes.

PDI - Professionalism - Case Study No. 2

The administration of Swampmire Vo-Tech has issued a new set of directives intended to address the problem of students arriving in class late. Sam, the diesel mechanics instructor, feels the new regulations to be excessive. After reading the directives to his class as he was instructed to do, he says, "Now you know the official line, but in my class we operate as I say".

Appendix Six

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

GOAL SUMMARY

TO ASSIST THE INSTRUCTOR IN UNDERSTANDING AND FORMULATING PROFESSIONAL HABITS CHARACTERISTIC TO AN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT.

Professionalism is a concept which is embedded at the core of all forms of educational practice. Professionalism is a nebulous concept; it is difficult to define. But, professionalism is the fabric which indicates the right and wrong -- the appropriateness or inappropriateness -- of the actions which comprise the teacher-student relationship. It is the ingredient which builds confidence, trust, and respect. It is the glue which holds the profession together and it is the framework which defines the roles of the teacher and the student.

Certainly, actions by an educator that raise statutory or ethical questions are not professionally sound. But professionalism is concerned with many actions which would never be considered by normal legal or ethical tests. A test of professionalism is a test of right or wrong; it is a "do right" test in terms of the appropriateness of an action to the welfare of the profession in general.

While lists of "do's and don'ts", said to define the actions of the professional educator have been published, and while certain actions are thought to be professionally unsound regardless of circumstances, no reliable barometer exists against which one can judge the professional appropriateness of many issues. One is advised to be aware of how various actions are viewed by the local school and by the community it serves. The definition of professionalism held by the administration of one

school may not be shared by his/her counterparts at another; what is acceptable in one community may be forbidden somewhere else.

But, professionalism is more than abiding by a set of standards dictated by others. It is a personal concept which, when put into practice, reveals much of the moral fabric of which each of us is comprised.

Appendix Seven

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

GOAL SUMMARY

TO ASSIST THE INSTRUCTOR IN UNDERSTANDING AND RELATING THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL INSTRUCTOR.

All jobs have their own unique set of job responsibilities which taken together, tend to define the position. This is certainly true for instructors in the postsecondary vocational-technical schools. The PDI highlights seven of the more important responsibilities of this position. By no means is this list intended to be complete.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The advisory committee is the primary vehicle by which vocational technical programs remain sensitive to the training needs of industry. The instructor is responsible for maintaining an active advisory committee in support of the program he/she teaches.

INSTRUCTION: Instruction is the essence of all educational effort. The "good teacher" expects every student under his/her charge to succeed and students respond largely because the teacher displays an attitude of caring for their welfare. The instructor is responsible for maintaining an instructional environment in which student success is assured.

PLACEMENT: The vocational-technical schools exist to place their graduates in jobs. As a result, both students, and business, and industry are served. It is the instructor's responsibility to locate job openings in their field and assist their students in their attempts to secure employment in those jobs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Instructors wage a never-ceasing battle to ward off technological obsolescence. Technological change is a daily occurrence which is bound to consume those content to stand still. To prepare students to assume a productive role in an ever-changing, ever-growing work place, instructors must keep abreast of those changes. Doing so is the instructor's responsibility.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: Certain program administrative functions, such as housekeeping, inventories, budgets, supplies, etc., are part of the job responsibilities of nearly every vocational-technical instructor. These functions are essential to the day-to-day operation of a vocational-technical program, and the instructor must see that they get done.

RECRUITMENT: No vocational-technical program will survive without a constant supply of students. These students will come to the program from many sources, and it is the instructor's responsibility to locate these potential students and interest them in studying in his/her program.

VOCATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS: Student vocational organizations (VSO's) have been an integral part of vocational education programs since vocational education began. VSO's provide students with valuable experiences leading to personal development, leadership skills, and social and interpersonal skills. The instructor is responsible for sponsoring and advising a vocational student organization for the students studying in the area in which he/she teaches.